

Aug. 21 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

the lead in securing U.S. ratification of the first Geneva Convention. The International Committee of the Red Cross has also voiced its support for our efforts to broaden the scope of this legislation.

In sum, this bill serves important goals and is a significant step forward. Now we should build on this progress and seek further improvements in promoting respect for the laws of war

and in reinforcing protections for the victims of war.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 21, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3680, approved August 21, was assigned Public Law No. 104–192.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

August 21, 1996

Dear Mr. :

I transmit herewith the 6-month report required under the heading “International Organizations and Programs” in Title IV of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, 1996 (Public Law 104–107), relating to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Mark O. Hatfield, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and Robert L. Livingston, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Partnership For Peace Initiative

August 21, 1996

Dear Mr. :

In accordance with section 514(a) of Public Law 103–236 (22 U.S.C. 1928(a)), I am submitting to you this report on implementation of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) initiative.

The ongoing adaptation of Europe’s security structures to post-Cold War realities remains one of our highest foreign policy priorities. A central element of this adaptation is the extension of NATO’s zone of stability and security to Europe’s emerging democracies. Over the past two and a half years, the Partnership for Peace has made a significant contribution to this goal by forging new cooperative ties between the Alliance and its Partners. This U.S. initiative has united NATO Allies with countries recently emerged from communist and traditionally neutral states in a partnership based on respect

for democratic principles, peaceful resolution of disputes, and practical cooperation.

For all Partners, PFP will be an enduring instrument for forging stronger ties with NATO. For those Partners interested in joining NATO, PFP is the best path to membership. As you will see from the enclosed report, NATO and its Partners have made impressive progress in broadening and deepening the Partnership over the past year. We are working with our Allies and Partners to build on the Partnership’s early momentum in the shared conviction that cooperation and common action are the best means to achieving lasting security throughout the Euro-Atlantic area.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Claiborne Pell, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and

Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Lee H. Hamilton, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations.

Remarks on Signing the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and an Exchange With Reporters August 22, 1996

The President. Thank you very much. Lillie, thank you. Thank you, Mr. Vice President; to the members of the Cabinet; all of the Members of Congress who are here, thank you very much.

I'd like to say to Congressman Castle, I'm especially glad to see you here because 8 years ago about this time, when you were the Governor of Delaware and Governor Carper was the Congressman from Delaware, you and I were together at a signing like this.

Thank you, Senator Long, for coming here. Thank you, Governors Romer, Carper, Miller, and Caperton.

I'd also like to thank Penelope Howard and Janet Ferrel for coming here. They, too, have worked their way from welfare to independence, and we're honored to have them here.

I'd like to thank all of the people who worked on this bill who have been introduced from our staff and Cabinet, but I'd also like to especially thank Bruce Reed, who had a lot to do with working on the final compromises of this bill; I thank him.

Lillie Harden was up there talking, and I want to tell you how she happens to be here today. Ten years ago, Governor Castle and I were asked to cochair a Governors' task force on welfare reform, and we were asked to work together on it. And when we met at Hilton Head in South Carolina, we had a little panel, and 41 Governors showed up to listen to people who were on welfare from several States. So I asked Carol Rasco to find me somebody from our State who had been in one of our welfare reform programs and had gone to work. She found Lillie Harden, and Lillie showed up at the program.

And I was conducting this meeting, and I committed a mistake that they always tell lawyers never to do: Never ask a question you do not know the answer to. [*Laughter*] But she was doing so well talking about it, as you saw

how well-spoken she was today, and I said, "Lillie, what's the best thing about being off welfare?" And she looked me straight in the eye and said, "When my boy goes to school, and they say what does your mama do for a living, he can give an answer." I have never forgotten that. And when I saw the success of all of her children and the success that she's had in the past 10 years—I can tell you, you've had a bigger impact on me than I've had on you. And I thank you for the power of your example, for your family's. And for all of America, thank you very much.

What we are trying to do today is to overcome the flaws of the welfare system for the people who are trapped on it. We all know that the typical family on welfare today is very different from the one that welfare was designed to deal with 60 years ago. We all know that there are a lot of good people on welfare who just get off of it in the ordinary course of business but that a significant number of people are trapped on welfare for a very long time, exiling them from the entire community of work that gives structure to our lives.

Nearly 30 years ago, Robert Kennedy said, "Work is the meaning of what this country is all about. We need it as individuals, we need to sense it in our fellow citizens, and we need it as a society and as a people." He was right then, and it's right now. From now on, our Nation's answer to this great social challenge will no longer be a never-ending cycle of welfare, it will be the dignity, the power, and the ethic of work. Today we are taking an historic chance to make welfare what it was meant to be: a second chance, not a way of life.

The bill I'm about to sign, as I have said many times, is far from perfect, but it has come a very long way. Congress sent me two previous bills that I strongly believe failed to protect our children and did too little to move people from